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THE LIFESTYLE COMIC MAGAZINE

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# RECEPTION

**H**OWDY PARTNERS!

Welcome to *Heartbreak Hotel*. Sorry we couldn't greet you proper-lahk last time around, but now you're here, why not pull up a chair and set a spell?

We'd like to start off this issue with a tip our hats to the one and only Mr Bob Boze Bell, the modern-day king of cowboy comics.

Arizona is famous for many things, but one of its greatest living legends is *Honkytonk Sue*, the Queen of Country Swing. Bob's creation is not the type of woman to sit around in Apartment number 9 countin' her roses. Sue's not waitin' for her man — she's out there in the honkytonks, bustin' loose and kickin' seven types of hell out of woosies.

Living and loving, there ain't no hombre that can put a noose around Sue. "Remember girls," says Sue, "if a man has to brag, he'll be the first to sag."

Honkytonk Sue is not just a good read — Bob's art is dynamic and completely unique. Reminiscent of those old prints of the Wild West, it has an edge that makes it thoroughly modern. His layouts are innovative, and his use of tone and shading give the art a sort of sandstone texture. You can feel the desert heat. . .

But Bob is much more than a comic book artist and writer. As an outrageous satirist for Phoenix's *New Times*, Bob



Illustration by Bob Boze Bell

lampoons life in Arizona every week. His book *Even Lower Blows* — a satirical look at life in America — is a collection of his best work.

We've got to thank Mr Hank Wangford for turning us on to Bob Boze Bell. And to help spread the word, we're giving away a copy of *Honkytonk Sue* number 4 in a really silly competition. Just send us the lyrics for an original country and western song featuring a child, a dog, a train, and liquor. Competition entries to *Heartbreak Hotel*, 29 Belsize Park, London NW3 4DX by April 1 please. The most countrified composition wins!

Well, it sure as shootin' looks like we've run out of space here. We'd best remind you that the first *Heartbreak Hotel* signing — featuring Margi Clarke, Bryan Talbot, and Mark Buckingham — will be on Saturday, February 13, 4.00pm at Chapter One, 6 London Road, Liverpool. Y'all come along now, hear?

And join us again in two months' time, when *Heartbreak Hotel* celebrates the ageing of the dawn of Aquarius (with apologies to Allen, Handley and Rigg). Get your groovy gear ready, coz it's gonna be a psychedelic explosion!













Jeezuz Crize!  
Jolene is  
wannathem!!

But - y'r  
wearin' a  
SKIRT! An'  
lipstick?!  
- A'n pantyhose!  
An lookit  
y'r hair!

- Whaddya  
do?

..what's  
it  
like?!

Eeeeyugggh!

Waaal, girls...y'know  
those times... y'sittin'  
at home...

- an' thinkin' just  
how good y'are at  
turnin' your man  
on...

Jeeezee!  
- Ah'm drinkin'  
the highball  
of a p'v'ert!

Listen- the things that  
woman can do  
to a man..

Women,  
it just *cain't*  
compare!!

neeeee!

y' just havta see  
t' believe!

don't even  
think about  
it, dick-  
brain!

I'll never  
hassle a  
woman  
again!

Ah- want her- when we're  
walkin'!





...n' when she's done sweet-talkin'!

**This frame is off limits to perving men—Tough.**

YAY!

YOW!

Am' that's sweet!

-Sounds neat...

neat?!?

She ain't got no use f'r a man

jus' lemme carry the crash!

go shove it up yr ass!

why momma din' tell me - caint understand...

Not that sweet lil' ol' lady too??!!

Yeah, girls! - Woman to Woman! M'm... s'the best!

Woman t' woman - forget all the rest...

Woman to Woman! S'all true! Woman t' woman! Jus' me... an you!

Heey... does your friend - have a friend?

Nrrrrgh!

tear

rend



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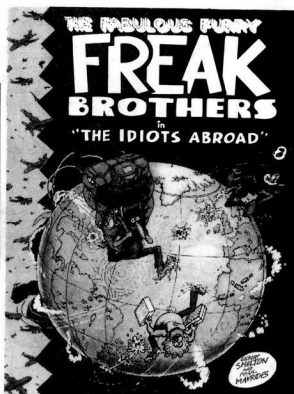
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# DIVINE

## DEFROCKED!

DIVINE, FOR THOSE of you with monastic lifestyles, is a larger-than-life female impersonator. Divine, the man beneath the frocks, is just plain large.

"John Waters, the film director, had the idea for Divine in the first place," he says. "He was looking for a very fat woman, but one who could be very much like Diana Dors, or Monroe, or Mansfield. Not just a blonde, but a flashy, trashy blonde.

"And when he couldn't get a very large woman who would wear skin-tight clothes, well . . . He always thought I was very funny and we were very close friends, and he asked me if I would dress up."

And from this impromptu question, the queen of trash, holder of the title "Filthiest Woman in the World", was born.

"I was 16 at the time and I never thought anything would happen. We made the movies on Sunday afternoons for lack of anything better to do. Remember, this was back in the Dark Ages — there were no discotheques then!

"My friend Van Smith designed Divine's look. He shaved my hair back, and shaved my eyebrows off. We didn't want Divine to look like just another drag queen, nor a real woman."

Divine, John Waters and Van Smith have continued to work together since those early days in Baltimore, making unique films like *Polyester* and *Lust in the Dust*. "Van still designs all my costumes, and I'm starring in John's new movie *Hairspray*. Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono and Jerry Stiller are in it. I play two separate parts, a man and a woman."

It was Alan Rudolph who gave Divine his first male screen role, as the coolly psychopathic gangster boss Hilly Blue in the film *Trouble in Mind*. Divine's performance was unsettling and, well, creepy — reminiscent of a modern-day Sidney Greenstreet. "I did model myself on him to a certain extent," Divine says. "I figured there was no one around to fill his shoes, so I'd slip right into them."

So does Divine see himself hanging up the frocks for good? "No— Dame Edna has given me renewed confidence. I'd love to host this game show they have in America called *Dance Fever*. Or be one of the judges and for once, tell the truth—some of those dancers are just awful."

Divine also has a number of hit records to his name. His new single is *Hey You* ("And be sure to tell everyone to buy it!"), but it was his song *You think you're a man* that infuriated the BBC.

The song was rocketing up the charts and he was invited to appear on *Top of the Pops*. He did. But when it was realised that the "woman" singing the song was a man, neither he nor the video made any further appearances.

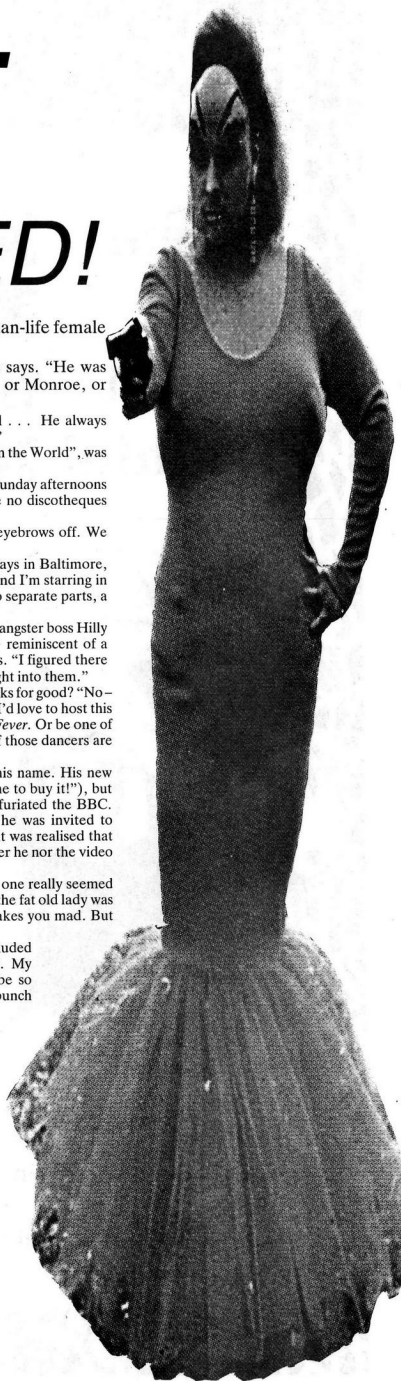
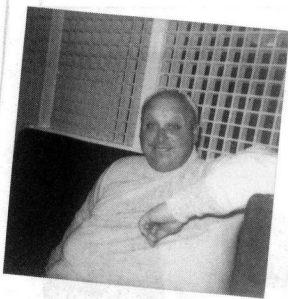
"It's funny, though," he recalls, "because no one really seemed that interested. They were just wondering who the fat old lady was on stage. First it hurts your feelings, then it makes you mad. But I've forgiven them. I've forgiven them."

Divine's musical roots certainly never included C&W, though. "I never liked country music. My mother would go to C&W concerts and I'd be so embarrassed — people would think we were a bunch of hillbillies."

And what does Divine do when he is in England? "Shop. I like to cover the area between Harrod's and Fortnum's. All over Bond Street. My feet just take me there. The first time I went to Fortnum's, I thought there was a wedding party in there. Then I realised they were the salesmen in tailcoats."

The future for Divine means more acting and singing. With serious male roles cropping up, the question springs to mind if Divine would like to take a female role in a "serious" film. "I'd like to do *The Killing of Sister George*," he says.

And then there's always the dream of an Oscar. "I went to a person's house in Hollywood," says Divine, "and he had a couple of them sitting on the shelf. So I stood there holding them — but they had the wrong name! And I thought, wouldn't it look good to see my name there? Divine."



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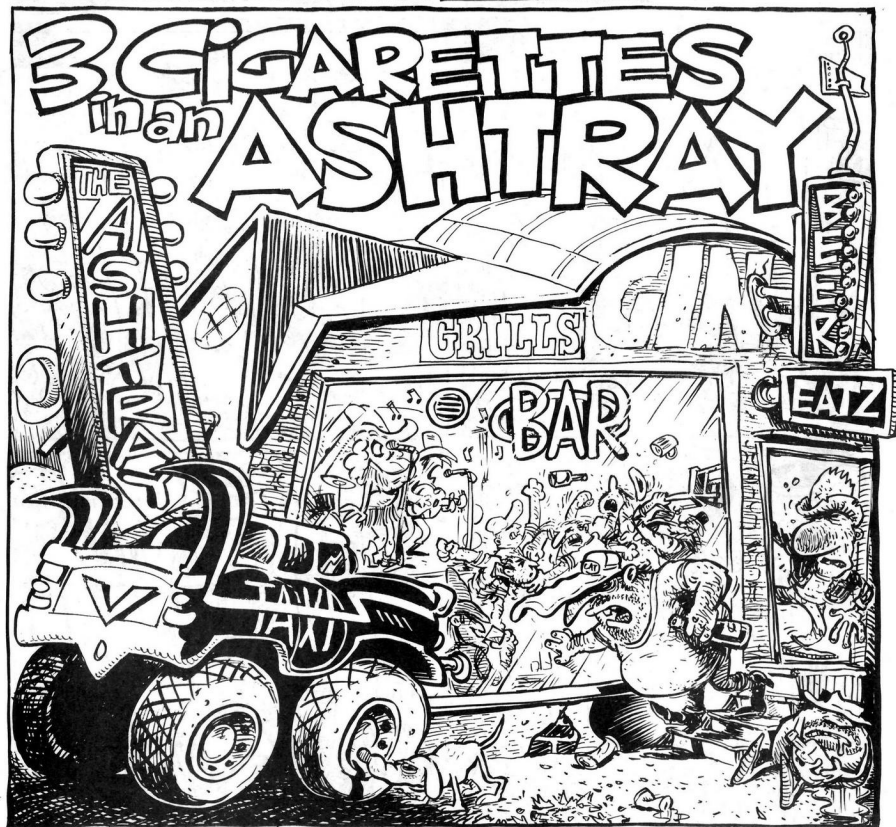
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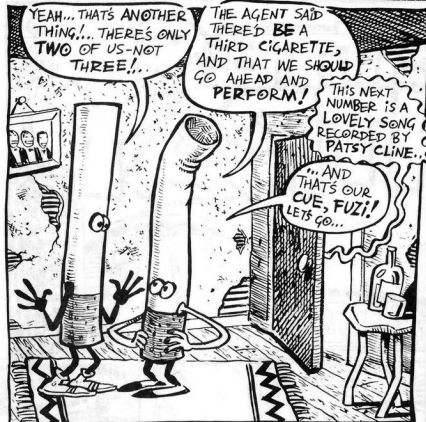
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# PAUL GAMBACCINI MY LIFE IN COMICS

DURING THE 70s I basically stopped reading comics. Occasionally if I passed a stand I would notice what was going on. I knew Kirby had gone to DC and done the stuff he'd done, but because the early experience was so complete... It was so rich, so beautiful, I'd one it. I was doing other things in life...

And then one day, somewhere around 1980, I was covering a comic mart in Westminster Central Hall for *Walter's Weekly* on Radio One, and there was this company from Manchester who'd come down late. They'd had a tire go flat on them, they arrived late, they needed money to get back to Manchester, and they were offering everything at half price. I noticed *Uncle Scrooge* number 1 at half price and I thought, "I've got to get this. I know this is a bargain. I love *Uncle Scrooge*."

I then had the opportunity to get number 3 and I did, and I thought... "I'm going to have to collect *Uncle Scrooge*." When I got halfway through *Uncle Scrooge*, I thought, "I'm going to have to buy the Donald Ducks now" — y'know, with Barks in it, because I so enjoyed it. But I thought, "I will never collect the *Comics and Stories* because there's just too many of them."

Anyway, I got back into the current comic scene gradually through Comic Showcase and Forbidden Planet. I remember there was a young skinhead at FP — Perry somebody-or-other. Perry! Where are you now! Look what you started! Thousands of pounds...

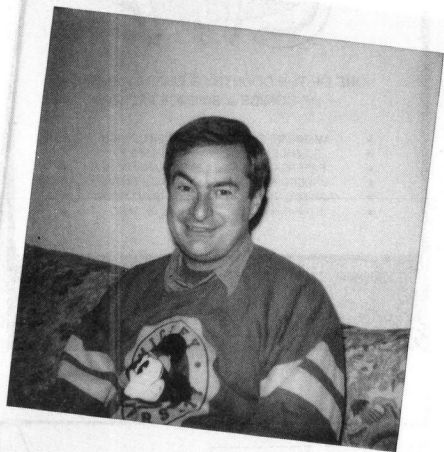
Whenever I was in the States, I'd hit the comic shops in New York, where they had far more Disney stuff, because Barks has never taken off in Britain. And Paul Hudson would get me duckstuff whenever he was in the States. So I asked Paul, "What modern comic do you enjoy the most?" And he said, "Oh, *Swamp Thing* is the best. This guy called Alan Moore is doing it." So starting around number 30 or something I was buying that, and it was easy to get the back issues.

But as I look back now, I was spending money like a bandit on the Barks stuff. And when I'd gotten all the *Scrooges*, and about half the Donalds, I thought (*sotto voce*), "I'm going to have to do the *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*." And this was a horrifying prospect, because he did over 300 issues of that title. A Barks fan and his money are soon parted!

The incredible thing is that while I was doing that, I would also pick up key Disney or humour issues that I encountered. By that I mean the original *Bambi* comic, the original *Dumbo* comic, the original *Snow White* comic. *Bugs Bunny* number 1. *Tom and Jerry* number 1, things like that...

And recently, this even took the form of getting some of the *Mickey Mouse* magazines from the 30s because I developed an interest in Gottfredson, through getting the *Comics and Stories*. Gottfredson did *Mickey Mouse* in the 30s in the newspapers, and the strips were reprinted in *Mickey Mouse* magazine and *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*.

And it was through collecting Barks that I encountered Kelly, because Walt Kelly did a lot of the covers for *Comics and Stories* in



the 40s and he did the *Our Gang* stories in the *Our Gang Comics*, which included a Barks feature called *Barney Bear*.

So that set me off on collecting Kelly. And of course, his prize character is Pogo. So that got me on to not only Pogo, but animal comics in which he appeared, and the other Kelly things. Kelly appeared in a lot of comics, he said... throwing his wallet into the air!

So here I am in this position where I don't have much stuff from the 60s because I had it as a kid — for some reason I retained *Green Lantern* number 1, *Silver Age*, and a couple of *Fantastic Four* that I had my letters in...

I kept a few comics with my letters in, but not all of them. So sometimes I'm surprised when people say, "Oh look, here's a letter from you," and I'd forgotten about it.

Charles Shaar Murray once walked up to me backstage at a Slade concert and he said, "Are you the Paul Gambaccini?" And I thought, "I've gotta say yes, because I am the only one in this country, but I wonder why he's asking it." And he said, "You're the one who had all the letters in comics!" And I thought, this is fantastic. I mean here I was, Radio One DJ, and there was someone who could give two hoots about that but thought I was wonderful 'cause I'd had all these letters in comics.

(Reader, we now pause for an interlude in which Don nips into the other room, only to return with a copy of *Ko-Zar* (first series) number 6, wherein is printed this writer's one-and-only fan letter. We discuss the fate of

other mid-70s letter-writers, Don goes on about the *Rocky and Bullwinkle* comic he has picked up (but never opened, I hasten to add), and I gently try to steer the conversation back to what is — to me, at least — the far more interesting matter at hand. Namely, M. Gambaccini's comic life.) So, did you actually go and buy all 300 of these...?

Yes. The only one I'm missing is one in which he only did the cover. *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 350. If anyone has it, please get in touch. But I have all the stories that he did in *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* and *Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge*.

And, as I say, it spilled over into some other key items. The whole humour field, I began to appreciate the best of it. But thank God I hadn't been bitten by the bug for anybody else like I was with Barks. Even though I'm gradually collecting Kelly, I'm not going flat out.

**What do you think of the modern funny animal comics like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Usagi Yojimbo*?**

I don't buy them. I bought one Turtle, and I haven't been able to read it yet. I bought the first *Usi*-whatever-his-name-is, but I haven't read it yet. It just doesn't grip me.

Y'know, there are some things you can't get into. For example, I never watched *Coronation Street*. I've never watched *Crossroads*. I've watched *EastEnders* for two minutes 'cause someone I knew was in it. I don't mean to insult these programmes, but it's something that's happening on the other side of the room in which I have no interest.

I watched *Dallas* twice. It was "Who shot J.R.?" and "Bobby is dead." Because they were such big events — they were news events. And I thought, if I'm going to be culturally literate, I've got to know what this is all about. I've never watched *Dynasty* — I've just seen endless re-runs of Linda Evans and Joan Collins fighting it out in a swimming pool.

So even though this one Turtle comic and this other sword-and-sorcery rabbit or whatever it is is sitting in my bedroom, I haven't been moved to open them up yet. Actually, who knows — maybe it'll be like *Conan* number 1. I bought *Conan* number 1 because Roy had written it and I still have it. I've never opened it, so it's in pristine mint sitting in a Mylar worth seventy bucks. So thank you Roy!

But I do have the bug now because I think comics are going through another wonderful period. But as with everybody else now, the battle is to buy as few comics as possible. Because the temptation is to buy too many.

The only Marvels I buy now are *Groo* and *The 'Nam*. I buy *The 'Nam* because I feel I have a personal thing at stake here. Even though I didn't go to Viet Nam, that war was my generation's big *bete noire*, and I want to see how it's being treated. It seems to me important to know how kids today are being taught what we went through as a generation.

**How do you think it's holding up?**

It's actually pretty good. It could be much worse. It's interesting that a war comic should be drawn in that way. It kind of makes it safer, so therefore it must be deliberate. They're not employing someone who's making it look as horrible as it was.

I bought *Moonshadow*. I got *Blood* number 1; I haven't read it yet. But for the most part, Marvels don't interest me any more. Again, because I did it. And here are these same characters still coming out, and good luck to them.

I buy *Wonder Woman* because I think what George Perez is doing is very interesting. I think he's drawing it very well. And I think the idea of this *Wonder Woman* — keeping it close to the myths — is valid and is very interesting. And I do buy the new *Flash*, because that was my favourite character when I was first starting out. I think Mike Baron is doing a pretty good job on this one.

**Isn't there a bit too much angst and guilt in it?**

What there is that bothers me is this bogus politics. I can't tell you how many comics I've stopped buying because there's either anti-Soviet feeling or anti-Arab... the stereotypical terrorist. It's so stupid. I stopped buying *Suicide Squad* because of that. I stopped getting John Byrne's *Superman* — that was very easy to give up. There were a couple of other DCs that I just thought: obviously people who are very ignorant are writing these comics, because it's coming out in their treatment of politics.

I read the Miller *Batmans* and I loved the Alan Davis ones. I stopped as soon as they went off the title, because it was their work, rather

than the title... I mean, *Batman* is a fascinating character. The possibility of a guy, a normal guy with no powers, who is so mentally obsessed that he goes out and does all these weird things — it's such a wonderful idea. It is almost limitless, because there's no end to the number of weird things he could actually do. So *Batman* is a more interesting character in human terms than *Superman*. I mean, Byrne has just killed *Superman* as far as I'm concerned.

I didn't really get exposed to Byrne until it was announced that he was coming to do the *Superman* stuff. So I thought, all right, I'll buy it for a while, see how he does it. And I was just so disappointed it isn't true. And you compare what he did with the two Alan Moore stories, which were works of genius — works of sensitivity and imagination...

I bought the first couple of John Byrne issues across the board, and then I just gave up. And I really resented the idea that, here he is — and he's doing all the old, classic *Superman* stories — which he is — and he's doing them worse. What is the point? You're trashing your own character. I think DC have made a colossal mistake in letting him do that title, and I think *Superman* will be OPD within a short time as well. Officially pronounced dead.

Now that just came out of my mouth, actually, I hadn't thought about this, but the possibility that *Superman* will be a dead character I think is genuine. It doesn't mean he has to lose his pivotal place in popular culture. I mean, *Tarzan* is a dead character but everybody still knows him. So he can become a mythic character without having a viable book. And it's possible that *Superman* will cease having a viable book.

But anyway, I said to Alan Moore — I'm glad I had a chance to say it to him — that when I read the last *Watchmen*, in addition to being very appreciative to him and Dave Gibbons for the superb series, I felt unexpectedly... empty. Because I realised that I was saying goodbye to superheroes. In other words, that after that, there was hardly anything left to say.

If I had written comics for a living, and if I could do it as well as he does — and he's so good that the possibility of that is remote — then many of the things that were said in that series were things that I would have liked to have said.

I felt very intimate with what was going on in there, because he was writing from a tradition that I'd shared growing up. He wrote those *Superman* stories, for example, out of a kind of perverse love for the Mort Weisinger era, with Krypto and all that kind of stuff.

And so here was this guy just tying up threads from my life in comics, and then wrapping it all up and saying, "Thank you and good night." And I thought, what superhero comic could possibly touch this now?

With the exception of *Wonder Woman*, because it's such an important concept, this idea of a feminist comic; *Batman*, this loony with no powers who yet somehow becomes a hero; and *Flash*, which I read...

**... For sentimental reasons.**

Probably. I find it difficult to imagine that there's anything out there that could happen. I'm enjoying *Concrete* wonderfully at this time. *Concrete* is this character whose brain was transplanted into a concrete body against his will and consequently he finds that there are things he can do... Also, he can never have sex again. It's interesting. It's a comic about what life would really be like for somebody who clearly could never be real. If you pull that off, it's a very good concept.

Strangely enough, I've just seen *Into the Woods* on Broadway, Stephen Sondheim's latest. The first half was brilliant. What if all your favourite fairy tale characters lived in the same town and helped each other achieve their happy endings? Wonderful idea.

But the second half was, "OK what if the stories continued in what we could call real life?" In other words, if the giant died when Jack chopped down the beanstalk, what would the reaction of his wife be? She'd come to Earth seeking vengeance. She'd want to kill Jack. Unfortunately, it was... terrible, it was just terrible. Because they couldn't do it realistically.

But *Concrete* is realistic as a comic, given the ridiculous central premise that here is this guy who could never exist. And it's a fascinating comic.

● We wrap up this interview in our next issue, as Paul Gambaccini talks about *Hellblazer*, Howard Chaykin, Jim Shooter, modern fandom, the decline and fall of popular culture, and answers the question: "What's a smart guy like you doing reading comics?"



ALONE AGAIN.



SO VERY  
MUCH ALONE.



THE SWAMP IS COLD  
AND SILENT  
WITHOUT HER.



WITHOUT THE TRUEST  
LOVE SHE'LL EVER KNOW.



WITHOUT THE GIRL WHO  
DROPPED IN FROM THE  
WILD SIDE OF LIFE.







L.I.F.E.

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FORMALISED  
ENVIRONMENTS

A STRING OF PEARLS  
IN SPACE.  
EACH BEAD CONTAINING  
THE REMNANTS OF  
A DYING RACE.

THE HUMAN RACE.



I DIDN'T KNOW THAT  
G.O.D. MADE  
HONKY TONK ANGELS.

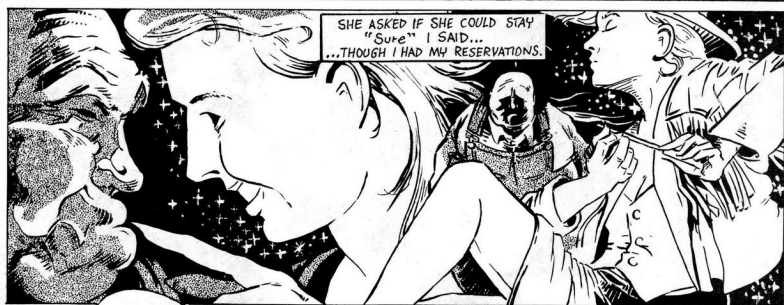
THE GIRL WASN'T HUMAN  
WELL, NOT QUITE.

BUILT BY BIO-TECH'S  
GENETIC OPERATIVES  
DIVISION, TO SATISFY  
THE DESIRES OF MEN  
IN THE RED LIGHT  
DISTRICT KNOWN AS ...

VICE  
SEX  
DRUGS

THE  
WILD  
SIDE  
LIFE

BY  
MARK BUCKINGHAM



SHE ASKED IF SHE COULD STAY  
"Sure" I SAID...  
...THOUGH I HAD MY RESERVATIONS.



I TAUGHT HER ALL I  
KNEW ABOUT THE  
WAY OF LIFE OF US  
COUNTRY FOLK.

HER EAGERNESS TO LEARN  
ASTOUNDED ME. SHE LOVED  
THE SWAMP LANDS.

AND I LOVED HER.

I WOULD HAVE MADE HER  
MY WIFE.



BUT AT NIGHT THE DISTANCE  
IN HER EYES TOLD A  
DIFFERENT STORY.

A black and white illustration of a woman in a cowboy hat and fringed jacket floating in the air, looking up with her mouth open. She is surrounded by stars and a dark, textured background.

**WILD  
SIDE**



"I'll be your baby"

# T HANK WANGFORD TALKIN' TURKEY

*In which we join Hank Wangford and Don Melia in the middle of their conversation as they enjoy a light winter lunch.*

LORETTA SEEMS TO say, "Stand by your man as long as he doesn't beat you too much." Implicit in this is that your man is always going to beat you to some extent. You're going to get hit on by your man when you need telling off. And as long as it isn't too much, or it's at times when you deserve to be told off, it's OK.

**What about the song *One's on the way*?**

Brilliant song. It was written by Shel Silverstein. It's very odd that he had that sort of insight into country at that time - into what a woman would sing in country - because it doesn't sound patronising at all. It sounds very natural, Loretta singing it. Good humour, funny lines.

**In the movie of Loretta Lynn's life, her husband came over as a bit of a wimp. A bit of a bully and a bit of a wimp.**

She always maintains he is her rock. She really does. It's for better or worse. Moony is her rock. He keeps the ranch together, and the restaurant... Loretta Lynn's Restaurant, which is terrific.

It's halfway between Nashville and Memphis, which, at 60 miles an hour, is a real boring drive. For four hours you just sit in the car and wait for the freeway to finish up in Memphis. And halfway down it is Loretta Lynn's fam'ly-stahl restaurant, where you c'n git turnip greens and you drink cold ice tea out of jars. You c'n git special Loretta Lynn drinking jars and take cold ice tea with you. It's brilliant, and the food is actually great - which is really a reflection on Loretta.

**What about Dollywood?**

I don't know what's happening to Dollywood, or how good it is. I haven't heard "this year's report". There should be a "this year's report" and it should be open and going. **I can see them turning the whole of Nashville into a theme park if it isn't already...**

No, it isn't. It's just a city, a very boring city. It's a business city.

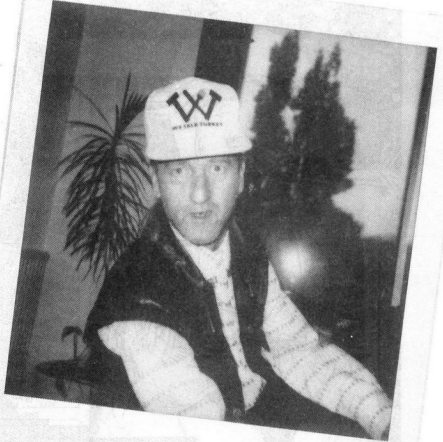
**My mother goes there every year, just to hear music. What she does is she and six girlfriends get in the station wagon, they drive from Canada to Nashville, they have a great time, hear a lot of music and come back.**

It is true that 90 per cent of the country fans are women. Women love Dolly Parton, and Loretta, and Tammy because they can identify with different parts of them. They can identify with Loretta's feistiness and sisterliness. Not feminism, but she stands up for her sisters. And she's been through it.

There's not many women that can say they've had it worse than Loretta. Her husband sending her home to mum, pregnant, because he wanted to step out with another girl. Being a grandmother by 29...

And then Tammy is different, with all those operations and the suffering. Tammy is the sort of suffering housewife. That's what Billy Sherrill did - he developed her act into the masochistic housewife. Because she had that crack in her voice more than any of them. Which is wonderful, and it's still there. Whatever you think about the music, boom!, that voice gets to you.

And Dolly's that other aspect of woman. You said you were surprised Tammy actually had tits, even bigger tits than Dolly. But Dolly did the Mae West. And I think she



has that real sharp brain that Mae West had. I think Dolly is the sharpest of them all, a really intelligent woman.

**On her special, she was making her own comments about her tits...**

And women can love her for that. They can laugh with her. Because she's just saying, "Look at these fucking men, they're such fools. All they want to look at is my tits."

**I'd like to see them all on one show, sitting together and chatting.**

I want them all on one show *singing* together. My fantasy. That's the aim on my new programme about women in country music, to get all three of them together. They are completely different women, and have those aspects of women that women, as well as men, can identify with.

**Would you like to star in a comic book? Would you like to have The Adventures of Hank in the Wild West End?**

I'm not fussed. Not really.

**What would you think if somebody put you into a comic book?**

I've been in *2000 AD*, mate! It's like getting the OBE. Billy Bragg was upset I got in there before he did. Look here - Judge Dredd: "There's some kind of ruckus going on at the Hank Wangford underblock." I was a proud boy.

**Do you read other comic books?**

I'm not a serious reader. Like in this last six months, I just about got through *2000 AD*. I read most of the American Gothic part of *Swamp Thing*. I've lost interest in *Swamp Thing* again. I enjoy a lot of the Frank Miller stuff. *Ronin* I haven't really got into. *Watchmen* I haven't read either. *Ninja Turtles* I quite liked, and *Cerebus*. The Miller was the most interesting new stuff, and Bill Sienkiewicz.

I did have the "lost years", which was sort of '68 to '72, when I did only read *Doctor Strange*, who was very good at

that time, and Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., which was the earliest Jim Steranko. No, he did something before Nick Fury, but I can't remember what it was.

But he really flowered in that, and he started doing the full-page spreads, and the double-page spreads. Terrific. Much more than Jack Kirby, he had the cinematic style – telling stories without words, a layout that was very new. Loved him, he was my favourite. But then he started getting too psychedelic for Marvel, I think.

Nick Fury used to be in *Sergeant Fury and his Howling Commandos*, but then he got turned into a sort of *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* Instead of throwing grenades at his pursuers, he'd throw psycho-cubes at them – sort of LSD sugar cubes – and they would be overcome by hallucinations. So it was all getting a bit obvious, and I think they closed Jim down. But he was definitely my favourite. I did read all the others, *Fantastic Four*.

**Did you grow up with a fascination for America?**

I don't think any more than anybody else, really, when I was a kid. Most of the pop stars came from America. The music came from America. Rock n' roll came from America. But it all got its own English version. You always had your Tommy Steele.

**Did you read English comic books?**

Yeah, *Eagle*. I didn't read *The Dandy* and *Beano* and all that, because they came from DC Thomson and they were always a non-union shop. My dad wouldn't have it in the house, because we were a strong union family. My dad was the chief sub-editor at the *Daily Worker*, which was the communist paper, the paper of the British Communist Party. Then it became the *Morning Star* and he left it, because it was not up front enough. But he was an old Stalinist, so we'd never have DC Thomson papers or comics. Which meant I still would read them – I'd slip off to a mate's to get to Desperate Dan.

**What did you think about American comics, like *Captain America*?**

A lot of them really don't touch me. I just wasn't really taken in by some of that period of Marvel Comics when they were becoming quite interesting. They were very innovative before they were completely overtaken by DC. I mean, DC were complete crap. DC was unmitigatedly boring at the end of the 60s and the beginning of the 70s. And that appears to have gotten reversed in the 80s, and now Marvel is trying to claw its way back.

# FILO GROC

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So long, Hank!





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# SAN \$ ANTONIO

"I'm picking Trini [Lopez] up at the airport Friday afternoon. He's flying in for my benefit for the Acapulco Children's Home."  
*Countess Petra von Grawert-Capon*



THERE'S  
MERIE AND  
TINA

DID  
YOU HAVE  
TO WEAR  
THAT DRESS  
again?

"My favorite viscountess is from Cleveland—Harriet de Rosière. I love Harriet. They love anyone in this town who has a title. Countess Petra von Grawert-Capon? She calls my house every day. She's had eight husbands, really nine if you count the one she's married to now. She just appeared from nowhere with a title and a tiara."

*Maxine Mesinger*



Bobby's  
HERE..

HI Jamie,  
HI George!

"Minorities. They won't be accepted just because they're black or Hispanic, but if they have talent, if they have ability... One of the great eye doctors here is Dr. Ruiz. He's accepted. On the other hand, you have Ninfa's, the Mexican restaurant—she's accepted. Armando's is a classic case. Rudi's and Tony's—you just name them all. Again, it depends on what people have to offer. It's a competitive town. It's not a cruel town, it's a forgiving town. But it's also a town that has no time for wastrels."

*John B. Connolly*

"I get excited when I drive in from the airport and see the skyline of Houston. I mean, it's just wonderful avant-garde architecture. And then we have sculpture in the middle of downtown. We have a Dubuffet, we have a Miro—it's really fabulous."

*Lynn Wyatt*

*Sakowitz heiress, wife of Oscar Wyatt*

"Houston is a big Dubuffet town."

*Robert Kinnaman*

*Antiques dealer*

IS THAT  
Glen OVER  
THERE? LET'S  
MOVE

"You've got to see the Portanova house. It's up for sale for ten big ones, but it's not moving. It's not so much the price as the upkeep. I mean, there are chandeliers over the swimming pool. Who's going to change the light bulbs?"

*Betsy Parish*





NO!  
WHAT DID  
MARLINE  
SAY?

Very few people are putting the right chair with the right table with the right curtains with the right lamps.

"It's like any great city in America: it's being built with immigrant labour, and in this case the immigrants are Mexicans."

*Bill Shero*  
Architect

"Old money is forty-eight hours old. New money is this morning."

*Betty Payton*

BUT  
RAY'S  
GOING  
TO BE  
FURIOUS!

"One of the things that always sells out is *Pinter*. Also this year, we had another sellout, *Cloud Nine*, which was quite interesting, because I thought we'd either be run out of town or it would be the biggest hit we ever had. But they bought it, and they applauded it, and they said, 'Yes, we are grown-ups, we are sophisticated people, and this is the kind of thing we can take.'"

*Pat Brown*  
Artistic director, Alamy Theatre



"The art scene here is all so new and exciting and alive and exciting. A couple of years ago, people stuck to birds and ducks; now we're installing neon signs in law offices."

*Barbara Davis*  
Co-writer, Davis-McClen Galleries

WELL,  
THE GANG'S  
ALL HERE,  
BUT -

"There is no such thing as upper-class in this goddam town. 'Cause most of these upper-class bastards were living on the low end of the talent pole. Just because they're now making money don't make them upper-class. I can take you out and introduce you to a lot of them, and you wouldn't have them in your house. The Caffers? Goddamn Hugh Roy Cullen was an oil-field roughneck—what makes him high-class? What makes his children high-class? What makes any of these people high-class? My father's father was a tailor, and he was very successful in the retail business and in real estate. Does that make me high-class? I'm asking you."

*Marvin Zindler*

- Where's  
Antonio?

"If you really can afford it, it's dumb to have a limousine—just take a helicopter. All the big buildings have helipads."

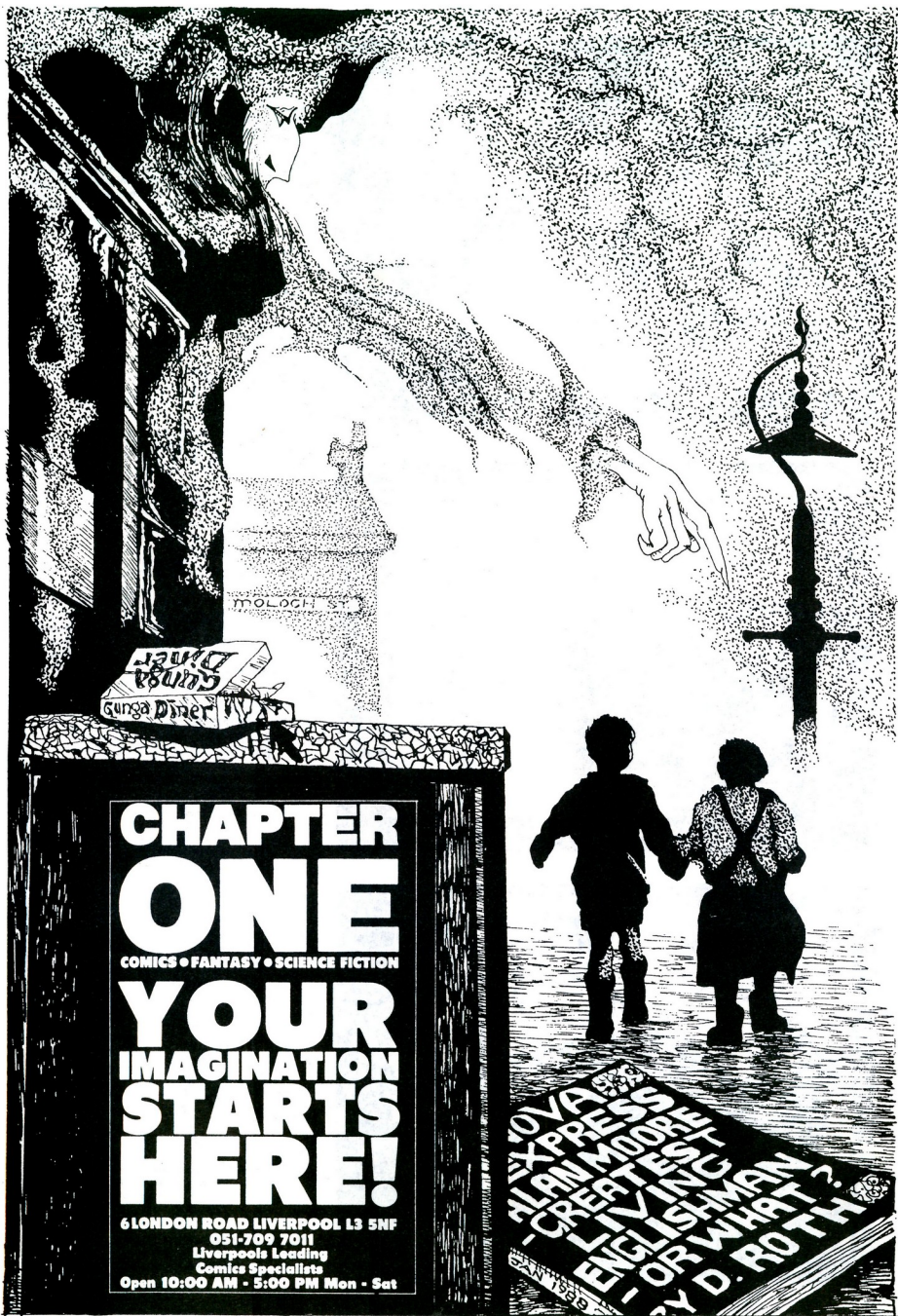
*Karl Kilian*  
Owner, Brasserie Boucharde

"You know, we have 100,000 Salvadorans here now."

*Sissy Farenthold*  
Liberal Democratic politician







# CHAPTER ONE

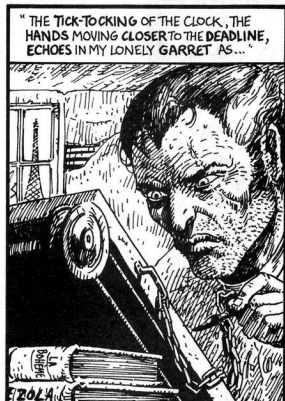
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# BRYAN TALBOT — THE INSIDE STORY



# THE KICKY SLUGGETER



I DIDN'T ASK FOR IT, BUT I BECAME DAREDEVIL. I FIGHT CRIME.

THAT MUCH I'VE DONE RIGHT WITH MY LIFE.

Illustrations © Marvel Comics

**Born Again**, by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli (Marvel Comics, £6.25).

Imagine sitting down to watch a newly-recorded tape of *The Big Sleep* only to find that some prick has recorded an episode of *The A Team* over the final half hour. Reading *Born Again* is rather like that.

*Born Again* is neither comic book nor graphic novel. Or perhaps it's both. This softback volume is a reprint of Marvel Comics' *Daredevil* 227 to 233, generally considered to be one of the high points of mainstream comics in 1986.

The first five of the seven issues reprinted are, unquestionably, magnificent. Karen Page, now a junkie and ex-porno star, reveals that Daredevil is Matt Murdock. This information reaches the Kingpin, who begins dismantling Murdock's life piece by piece. Methodically, he tampers with Murdock's financial records to screw up his mortgage, arranges for an Internal Revenue audit which freezes all Murdock's funds and fixes a charge of criminal misconduct to rob Murdock of his licence to practise law.

As a final stroke, the Kingpin blows up Murdock's home, leaving him to sleep in the street, and — eventually — tries to kill him. All that remains of the man is his spirit. We see his fall to the edge of madness, his salvation through sheer stubbornness and the beginnings of rebirth.

Meanwhile, Ben Urich — Murdock's journalist friend at the Daily Bugle — is investigating Murdock's fall from grace. This results in Urich's fingers being broken by one of the Kingpin's stooges and the attempted murder of his wife. Urich is left to fight his own internal battle.

Miller and Mazzucchelli handle this marvelously well. We watch Murdock's decline agog at the thought of how easily our own lives could be demolished. Daredevil in this situation is simply irrelevant.

At his nadir in a dosshouse, all Murdock can think of is a violent fantasy: "I walk out and a kind stranger gives me a ride uptown to the Kingpin's headquarters and I punch the Kingpin out and he begs for mercy and gives me my life back and surrenders to the police and everybody knows its me who beat him and there's a parade." Next to the Kingpin's cerebral string-pulling, that looks nothing short of pathetic.

Miller's hard-boiled writing and grasp of his characters would not disgrace Raymond Chandler, and Mazzucchelli's art puts the moments of psychological drama across with chilling effect. Urich, for example, begins the book as



realistically rendered as any of the characters. But by the time the Kingpin's intimidation has him at rock bottom, he is reduced to a few brutal charcoal lines.

Up to this point, this has been just the sort of series you ache to show to a non-comics fan: adult, modern, street-smart and refreshingly free of superhero hyperbole. Miller even seems slightly embarrassed at having to include the guy in the red tights in these pages at all — Murdock always has to come up with a pseudo-rational excuse before he can put on the costume. So far Miller has given us, if not exactly *The Big Sleep*, then at least a credible exercise in comics *film noir*.

The A Team makes its appearance in the shape of Nuke, a Rambo-like figure imported to Hell's Kitchen from Nicaragua, and a guest shot from Captain America with a couple of assorted Avengers. Miller's problem, I suppose, was getting the Kingpin to commit a crime large enough to bring him down despite all his connections — at least as far as his ambitions to go legit are concerned. But flattening a whole neighbourhood? With napalm? Do me a favour. . .

It's not that there aren't some nice sequences in these final two issues. Murdock's new job as a cook makes perfect sense, and Captain America — "the soldier" — is handled very well. It's just that all this "punch 'em inna face" stuff sits so ill with the tale which it concludes. It's also going to turn off any readers from outside the superhero ghetto, confirming their suspicion that there is something inherently stupid about comics as a whole.

This is a pity, because surely one of the most important contributions these prestige reprints can make to the medium is the potential for new readers via bookshop display. Miller's *Dark Knight* series obviously did some sterling work here, and I suspect the forthcoming *Electra Assassin* collection will also help. This particular example, though, finishes up as a bit of a disappointment. Perhaps we should all agree to blame Jim Shooter.

**Born Again** is available at Comic Showcase, 76 Neal Street, London WC2.



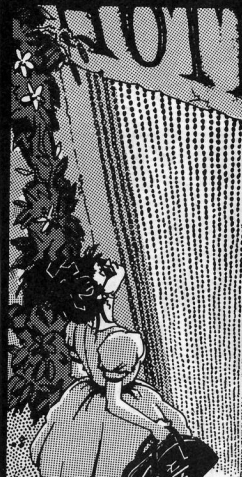
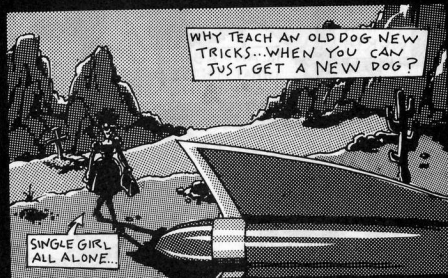
MATT... BEN, I JUST HEARD...

"I HAVE NO ARGUMENT FOR THE PRESS, A STRANGER TELLS ME."



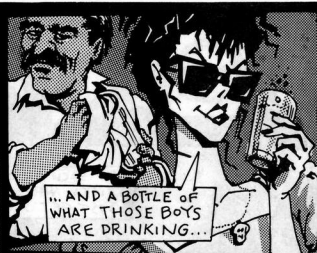
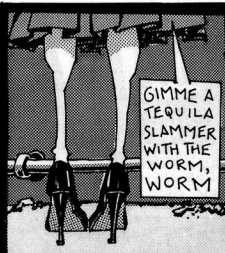
# Jessamy

PARKIER/CALKIN #87



NESTLED IN A SLEAZY SUBURB OF MEXICO CITY...





BUSINESS WAS LOOKING GOOD, UNTIL LATE ONE NIGHT, ON HER WAY TO PEDRO'S BAR...

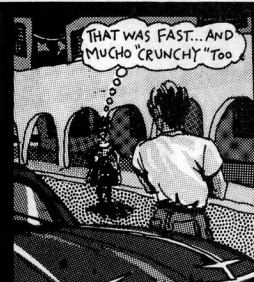






¡POR FAVOR! NO  
SPEAK SO LOUD...

I NO ONE PUSHES ME  
AROUND! TELL THIS  
ANGEL CREEP IF HE  
WANTS TROUBLE,  
HE KNOWS WHERE  
TO FIND ME!!



THAT WAS FAST... AND  
MUCHO CRUNCHY "Too"

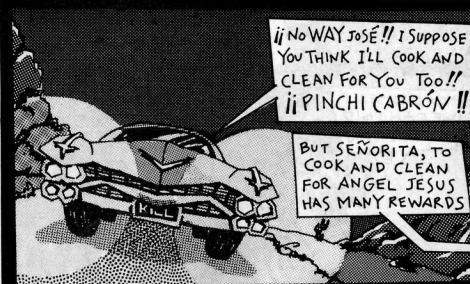


GET IN,  
STUD...



CUT THE  
GUACAMOLE  
AND GET TO  
THE POINT

I MAKE YOU THE OFFER--YOU WANT TO STAY  
IN TACO GRANDE--YOU WORK FOR ME,  
YOU BECOME MY WOMAN--OR YOU GO...



¡¡ NO WAY JOSÉ!! I SUPPOSE  
YOU THINK I'LL COOK AND  
CLEAN FOR YOU TOO!!  
¡¡ PINCHI CABRÓN!!

BUT SEÑORITA, TO  
COOK AND CLEAN  
FOR ANGEL JESUS  
HAS MANY REWARDS



SOD THE  
HOUSEWORK  
GIMME THE  
REWARDS



WHILE ANGEL PROVES HIS  
MANHOOD, HIS DISCIPLE  
IS UP TO NO GOOD BACK  
AT THE HOTEL BURRITO



¡HASTA  
MAÑANA  
BABY!

4 HOURS, 28 MINUTES,  
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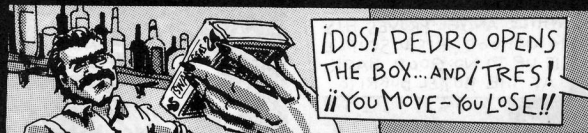
ANGEL IS  
IMMORTALISED  
WITH  
JESSAMY'S  
FAVE BLADE:  
"MR. ASSASSIN"







...RUSSIAN  
ROULETTE  
"MEXICAN  
STYLE"  
(A GAME OF  
NERVES)



Continued next issue...

# JUST COMICS



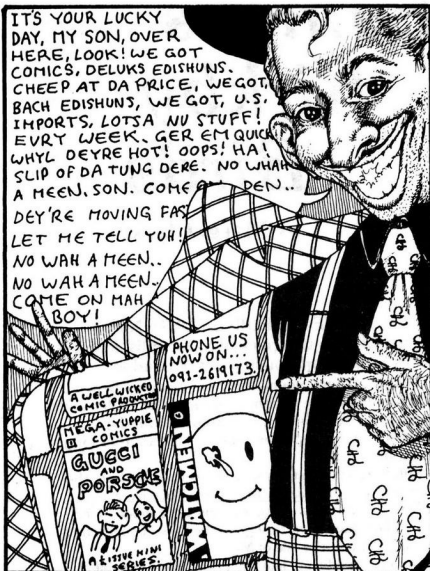
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# Famous Kirkby Birds

by Margi Clarke

**T**HE SPEEDING EUSTON to Liverpool train was packed to the gills, like it is every Friday night pulling out of London.

Teams of them, young and not-so-young men, carrying home the bacon, a hungry feast set for table and bed — they pleased or teased the waiting women, made happy and reseeded for another long and lonely week.

But, they were on their way anyway...away from the overcrowded hostels, five to a room. They were christened "the new cockneys", but were made to feel more like refugees, as foreign in their own country as a cussing Turk on the Isle of Man.

On a crowded train like the Friday night special, it was wiser without a ticket to "hide the loot under the light", so I headed along the heaven' passageways to sit meself on Jim Dog the train-driver's knee. Roaring along the track we swapped traveller's tales of other famous journeys. There were lots of them, seeing how one was made every week, and some as legendary as any transatlantic crossing.

"My favourites," I told Jim with a slug of whisky and a roguish look upon my face, "were...the Paddy invasions." Once a month they emptied Dublin in droves

photo by Christina Brier

to reach the cheap shops of Liverpool and, devouring everything in sight, carried the spree energetically to London. The sight of them on the train terrified the life out of the more respectable Runcorn commuters, as the Irish shoppers steamed along givin' billy-o up and down the train, moving *en masse* — as one — triumphantly taking over the first class compartments. I very nearly pissed myself twice at the frantic antics of the first class passengers taking fright, hiding in toilets and corners in dread of "the pirate Paddies".

## Into the plunge...

Inching its way along the long dark tunnel, the train stopped before the final delivery to bustling Lime Street Station. I jumped out of the driver's cab and waved goodbye till the next time. As I approached the ticket barrier I just heard an old porter informing a young guard as I passed through the gate:

"That's Boxcart Bertha, she rides the trains with Panache!..."

## And onto the couch...

Home. Home means sleep. A good doss on me Ma's couch (built to seat six, at Christmas it grew to sit ten). I slept for hours, and if I was lucky, I'd dream a "bute", a real bute, an apparition, my handsome spectre beckoning me out...out...

"Let her sleep, Michael," hushed my mother's trusting tones; "she must need it."

"Don't worry about our Mary, Fran. She could sleep on a washin' line!"

## Stretchin'...

Stretchin' my hands down deep, fingering the magical powers of my make-up bag, a false eyelash crawled out from behind a tube of glue and secured itself like a pickled cockle upon me eye. I just love the generous alchemy of a woman's make-up bag, it never fails to excite most men. Some of the more possessive types, the ones who like to window-shop for engagement rings on the third date, positively do a Johnny Rotten and freak out at the mere sight of one, knowing that any minute now it comes — the change — the transformation scene from base metal to gold when yer off and OUT.

Yes girls, I never go anywhere without me bits. Give me the purple eyelashed lids anytime. I mean, who





# SUZIE'S TERRIBLE TANTRUM

*Or: I DON'T WANNA PLAY HOUSE*

Written by David Leach

Illustrated by Petra Manley

**O**n the edge of a very big, ugly, grey city, stood a pretty little town and in this pretty little town stood a little school. It was a very nice little school, shadowed by a lovely tall church. Next to it was a cheerful little playground, and in this cheerful little playground stood a pretty little wendy-house. It was a very pretty little wendy-house with lovely pink checkered curtains that hung in the window, and bright, big flowers painted all over the walls.

Outside in the playground the little children who went to the school were getting ready to play.

"I know, lets play 'Mummies and Daddies'," said Robert happily (because he was a happy little man).

"Oh yes, lets," chirped the other children, especially the girls who loved to play in the pretty little wendy-house. Cleaning and polishing, washing all the dishes and cooking all the boys' dinners before they returned from their war games and fights.

"You girls go inside the wendy-house while we play soldiers, and make sure that dinner is on the table by the time we get back!", said Simon in a rather bossy manner (because he was a rather bossy little man).

Suzie, Amanda and the other little girls skipped into the pretty little wendy-house. Oh they did work jolly hard for girls. Amanda polished the bright, big flowers that were painted all over the walls until they shone even brighter and looked even bigger than they did before, while Brenda swept the floor with her smart new, pretty pink broom. She thought it was just about the smartest, prettiest broom she had ever seen. And while she swept the little wendy-house she sang and hummed all her favourite songs, just like her mummy did.

Suzie collected together all the washing-up and took it to the kitchen, where there was a great big washing-up bowl full of lovely soapy bubbles. It was the same colour pink as Brenda's smart new broom, and the pretty pink checkered curtains that hung at the window. Suzie thought it was quite the prettiest washing-up bowl she'd ever, ever seen. It was also the biggest, which was just as well since there was a huge pile of washing-up to do. There were great big yellow saucepans with great big smiles and great big eyes and smaller saucepans with smaller smiles and smaller eyes. There were also great big red mugs and slightly smaller blue ones and large orange plates with no faces at all.

Suzie pulled on her pair of enormous rubbergloves, which her mummy had given her last Christmas, (they were her bestest most favourite present ever!). Then she put the big yellow saucepan into the lovely bubbly water and began to wash it clean (just like her

## SUZIE'S TERRIBLE TANTRUM

mummy did). She scrubbed and scrubbed it with her little brillo pad until she was sure the great big yellow saucepan's great big smile was even bigger and brighter now she had cleaned it so well. Then she put it on the side to dry before starting all over again on the other saucepans and stuff. It was going to take her a jolly long time to finish.

Outside in the playground, Robert and Simon were swinging as high as they could on their swings while other boys built grand castles with coloured bricks. Some of the little chaps were digging tunnels in the sand pit, and Billy had the slide all to himself. Oh what fun those little men were having!

Suzie stared through the window at the boys in their tough unscuffable shoes and their practical trousers, so strong and sturdy they could really roll, romp and play in them. They could even do hand-stands and their trousers wouldn't fall down. Suzie wished she could play like the boys, she wished she could rush out there now and do twenty cartwheels and lots of hand-stands (although for her it was just a dream). If she tried her skirt would fall down and all the boys would see her frilly white Marks and Spencers knickers (which her mummy had said was very rude and shameful). Suzie was getting flustered, it seemed to her that there was one rule for the boys and one for the girls.

*They* could come to school in tee shirts or jumpers, it didn't matter if *they* got dirty but she had to wear this horrid red smock (which her mummy had said she must keep clean and tidy). She had to wear ghastly white ankle socks and useles black plastic shoes. Her mummy had even forced her to wear a sickly red ribbon in her hair. When the boys played games, they played adventure games like cowboys, spacemen or soldiers, but the girls stayed in the Wendy-house, or they skipped, played



'Hopscotch' or stood around in groups gossiping and giggling. Suzie was getting angry. She didn't want to sew or make fairy cakes. She didn't want to push prams around, or even hold teddy bear picnics. She wanted to play with cars, to swing on the swings, dig in the sand-pit, or build castles with the bricks. She wanted to be a cowboy or a space explorer, not a nurse or a house wife, but most of all she wanted to punch Simon Osborne in the mouth for calling her a 'virgin' (although she didn't know what it meant she knew it was very, very wicked).

She stared at the greasy, grimy water and at the pile of washing-up, then she looked at her friend Amanda as she polished the floor, just like her mummy did. Suddenly it dawned on her.

"Amanda, what the **FUCK** am I doing in this damp, smelly, shit-hole of a shed, up to my armpits in cold water, pretending I'm enjoying myself?"

"Pardon?" said Amanda, visibly shaken by her friend's coarse and very rude language.

"Why the hell should we have to do all the bloody washing-up and cleaning? The boys don't,



## SUZIE'S TERRIBLE TANTRUM

they get to play outside, so why don't we? It's not **FAIR!** And I don't want to wear this shitty dress and poxy ribbon! **I'M-SICK-OF-PLAYING-HOUSE**, and starting today I'm not going to, I'm going to do what I **WANT**, not what I'm supposed to!" and with that Suzie ripped the rubber gloves from her hands, tugged the red ribbon from her hair and tore the useless shoes and socks from her feet. The other girls followed as little Suzie charged out of the pretty little wendy-house, screaming joyfully as she went.

The boys watched in horror as Suzie rolled in the dirt, leapt to her feet and started to cartwheel across the ground, shrieking as she went. She finished her last cartwheel then scampered towards the boys. She danced between them and with an almighty kick blasted little Albert's brick castle to pieces, then started to build a new one. Simon was the first to react to the incredible scene.

"**SUZIE**, just what do you think you're doing, you can't possibly have finished all the washing and stuff, I hope you've got dinner ready, or so help me I'll have to give you a jolly good beating!" (Which was just what his father said and did). Behind him the other little men murmured in agreement, Suzie looked up at him, then slowly stood.

"Pardon?" she smiled.

"I said" started Simon, a bit taken aback, "that if you haven't finished all the chores we gave you, I'll jolly well beat you!" And with that he shook his little fist at her and she glared.

"Yes that's what I thought you said, you **ARROGANT LITTLE SHIT!**" and punched him hard in the stomach.

"**AAAARRRGggghhhuugggh...**!" he exclaimed, slumping onto the grass. The rest of the little chaps rapidly retreated, as Suzie heaved the pain-stricken Simon to his feet, dragged him to the sandpit and buried him head first up to his neck. Then she turned to face the others.

"Listen to me you bastards, I'm sick to death of slaving away, pretending I'm enjoying myself. I'm not your servant or slave. I don't want to grow up like my **MOTHER**, chained to the kitchen. Why should I?! Can anyone of you **LITTLE MEN** give me one fucking reason why I have to do all the bloody chores?"

"Well I thought you liked doing them, I mean if you don't who will?" whimpered one of the boys nervously. Suzie glared at him.

"We all will, we'll do them together. Every thing shared."

"But we already do," mumbled Simon from the sandpit. "You do all the chores, while we fight the wars, and bring home the bacon!" (For which he received a sharp kick to the balls.)

"**AAARRRGggguuggghhhh...**"

Suzie pointed angrily at the pretty little wendy-house. "That is the symbol of our oppression! It's my ball and chain. And now I break the links and set myself free! Starting today you'll help us with the chores, and share the toys, the swings, the slide, the sandpit and the games. If I want to be a cowboy, or a space explorer then I can, but if we have to play house, then you'll help! **DEATH TO THE OLD ORDER-LIFE TO THE NEW!** Accept us as your equals or face the consequences. Well **LITTLE MEN** what do you say to that, are you for me or against?"

The boys murmured softly at first, and



## SUZIE'S TERRIBLE TANTRUM

then with anger.

"**NO!**" shouted little Albert, "we won't let you, your place is in the home, looking after us and bringing up babies". A united cheer rang out, "**YES,** we're not going to let a little girl boss us around. Get back to your little wendy-house or we'll beat you up!". Slowly the mob of boys advanced towards little Suzie.

"Hold on there chaps," shouted a voice from the back of the incensed mob. It was young Robert, a strapping, good-looking seven year old, destined to become rich and famous. He pushed his way through the throng of bewildered boys, gripped Suzie's hand in his, stared deep into her eyes and smiled a strong powerful smile. "Don't worry love, I'm on your side!" Then he turned to face his former friends.

"Lads, Suzie's right, we do boss them about, force them to wash and clean. When we play 'Mummies and Daddies' they stay in the Wendy-house, while we pretend to go to work and have affairs with our secretaries. We must stop this role playing, smash the molds! We aren't better than them, we're all the same under the skin! We have to free our sisters and unite, not control and dominate! Help me destroy the symbol of their oppression. Follow me and I'll show you the way!" And with that Robert marched the children across the grass towards the wendy-house.

"Stay back," shouted Robert, as he pulled a box of matches from his trouser pocket. Then he knelt by the side of the pretty little wendy-house, struck five matches together and carefully lit the base of the dry wooden wall. Rapidly he retreated as the fire took hold and burnt the pretty little wendy-house to the ground.

"There you are Suzie, the symbol of your oppression is destroyed!" smiled Robert triumphantly.

"But that isn't what I meant, I just wanted to change your attitudes towards women, not destroy property."

"Oh come on Suzie, grow up, who's ever heard of peaceful revolution?" frowned Robert, Suzie faltered, stumbling for words, when suddenly,

"Just what on **EARTH** is going on here?" roared Miss Lewis, the Maths teacher as she thundered towards the terrified children. "Who burnt down the wendy-house?". Then she spotted Simon's slumped body, jutting from the sandpit, "Good gracious me what's happened to poor little Simon, come on now which one of you little monsters did this?"

All the children, at last united, quaked in their shoes as Miss Lewis's piercing eyes burnt into their very souls.

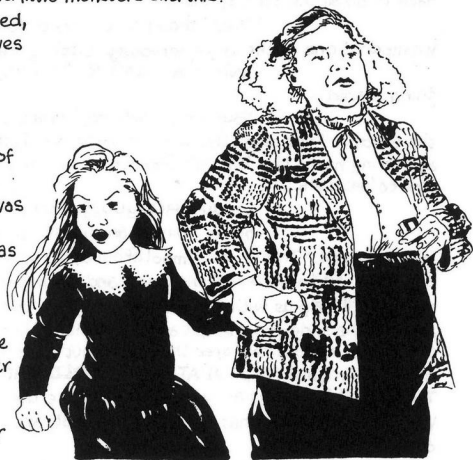
Suzie felt confused and panic stricken, all her plans now lay in ruins, every thing had gone wrong. Then she felt something slipped into her hand, it was the box of matches, suddenly she heard Robert shout out,

"It was her Miss Lewis, it was Suzie, she burned down the wendy-house!"

Suzie looked up, stunned as Miss Lewis darted towards her, with incredible dexterity for one of such advanced years.

"**YOU BASTARD!**" she screamed at Robert, as Miss Lewis's nimble and boney fingers made painful contact with her right ear.

"**YOU FUCKING MALE CHAUVINISTIC TRAITOR!**" she roared. But for Suzie the revolution was over,



THE END

# Willie and Jolly - the story so far...

Jolly and Willie met at a very early age and they have been firm friends ever since

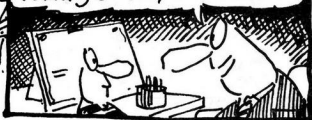


Since days of old Jolly's family had been in the cartoon biz...



Jolly would sit on his dad's knee and listen to old jokes and long tedious stories about how easy it is to be funny.

I'm a cartoonist, your grand father was a cartoonist, his grand-father was a cartoonist... get my drift?...



**Yes!** Jolly realised with a horrible lurch that he was expected to carry on in the family tradition or risk disgrace, and being cut off without a felt tip...



Secretly Jolly wanted to be a TAX INSPECTOR. He had long admired the mysterious workings of the I.R. and the strange, enigmatic personnel who worked there. He also had an aptitude for annoying people.



At night he would smuggle books on accountancy, mortgage interest relief, trusts, and offshore scams into his bedroom and read them under the covers, risking the uncontrollable temper of his father.

Willie did not share his obsession...



Willie had ideas of his own. They had long hair and bumps on the front. School girls!!



By constantly throbbing Willie contrived to interest Jolly in these wonderful new toys. Inevitably Jolly neglected the studies so crucial to get on in the taxodge, and slid helplessly into the family business. Just to get even he went onto do silly books about Willie.



Not long ago someone said "Did you realise that 'Jolly Giraffe' is a perfect anagram of your name?" "No, said Jolly, "but isn't that interesting?"



THE END (so far)

Gray Jolliffe

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**WHAT** was Jonathan Ross's pen-name when he wrote comics?

**WHO** was the first executive secretary of the Academy of Comic Book Fans and Collectors?


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Bring on the credits	David Batchelor
Voice and Words	Heather Christian
Guitar & Tunes	Rick Buckler
Hi Hats/Tambourines	Korky The Kat
Drums	Matt Black
Bass	Minnie the Minx
Piano	Cas E. O.
Strings	Cynthia Pain
Recreation	Don Melia
Photography	Wing Wau Lau
Original Concept	Douche
From Aa Idea By	

Verse 1

I see the lights outside  
reflecting in my window  
I see the collar turning  
up against the rain  
his hand goes down inside  
yet deep into his pocket  
she looks into his eyes  
and smiles at him that way

Ex . . .

It could have been so good  
in spite of ourselves  
our children loved us then  
so there are they now

Chorus

For crying out Jimmy, Jimmy  
Jimmy The Turk  
I thought I could do it  
But it just won't work  
Can you hear me Jimmy  
Can you hear me shout  
What were you doing  
When the lights went out . . .

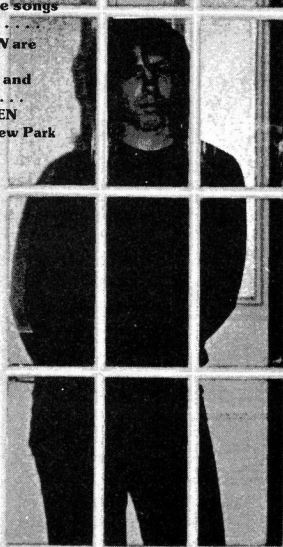
Verse 2

She stays alone at night  
just staring at the dishes  
in a bar somewhere  
on the other side of town  
she dreams of yesterdays  
the hits and all the misses  
she'll take a valium  
and she will settle down . . .  
(repeat Ex + chorus)

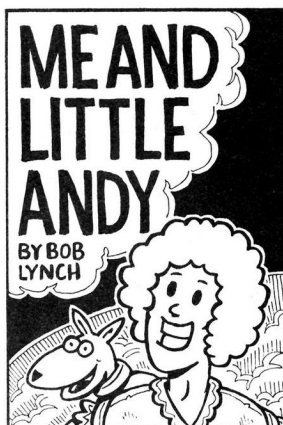
Verse 3

I see the colours turning  
red like the flames in autumn  
they die so easily  
your hands like melting snow  
I hear the lies and things  
they say you call her p  
Oh but I wonder  
will you ever let her kn  
(repeat Ex + 2 x Chorus)

Words by David Stanley Bate







Daddy stumbled off to town yesterday to buy his drink. He never came back. We grew hungry.



So we went in search of food and comfort, rain soaking us to our souls.



So you are all we have left to love us, please look after us, mister, we won't cry or cause any bother.



Well, my heart would be stone-hard if your story didn't move it. You go to bed and I'll make breakfast in the morning.



Now, you two go visit the land of nod. I'll be your mummy and your daddy.



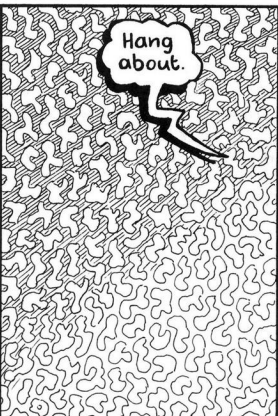
I don't know about you, dear reader, but I find the doing of good deeds most refreshing. But...but...



Somehow this all seems familiar, like an old song by Dolly Parton. Hmm...



Hang about.



Just as I thought, a small, tragic ditty from the mid 70's called 'Me and Little Andy'. Everything matches.



Gosh! According to these lyrics, angels are going to snatch my guests and take them to heaven!



Or, in other words, they will die tonight!



But wait! There is no need for them to die while I am around. I'll protect them!



If those perishing angels try to put one foot into this house I'll bat them!



Pardon us for interrupting, but we believe you have a girl and a dog for us.



So if you could just bring them out to us right now we will take them up to heaven, thank you.



You're not going in there. You may be more than mortal, but I'm on the side of the angels!..erm.



Yes, morally confusing, is it not? But all we want to do is take them to the land of fluffy-kids and dogs.



Or do you want us to show you the other side of the after-life? The nasty side?





# Living e g e n d



**T**he CBS anchor man had just informed me that I was about to watch a special on Miracle Comics. So, after a quick word from the show's sponsor, I settled down for an evening's viewing.

The year is 1941. Deep in the heart of Manhattan are the offices of Miracle Comics. The editor has called a meeting of the writers and artists.

The youth of America (God bless America!) need a hero. Someone to look up to. Someone to fight the Nazi monster threatening the free world. And so, the legend begins. American Eagle is born.

The creation of this legendary hero is not without pain — he is born from the tyrannical ravings of an editor who holds absolute power over his writers and artists.

The play really begins to take shape at this point, and I found myself transfixed. It was a bit like when you get hold of a really good comic and for twenty minutes you enter another world.

Before I knew it, the show was over in a flash of BIFF, BANG and WALLOP. I had seen American Eagle born, in love, turned

on, rejected, shelved, and finally, brought back as a graphic novel.

I had seen him fight the Scarlet Claw. I had gone through the Second World War, Nixon, Viet Nam, the CIA, FBI, and KGB... At the same time, I had followed the lives of American Eagle's creators in their struggle for artistic freedom.

The cast, all fresh out of acting school, was young and lively. Worthy performances from all, but a few shone a little bit brighter. Sarah Hasnip, as Stella of the CIA, also took on all the other female roles — each one very different and demanding.

Chris Amos, as the scientist who creates American Eagle, gave a very comic performance in one of his other roles as a terrorist who hijacks a plane. And as one of the passengers of that plane, I was sure glad to see American Eagle come to my rescue.

American Eagle is played to great effect by Martin Lewis, and David Young as the power-mad editor was stunning. Ian Williams, who plays the nasty Scarlet Claw, could be given a larger slice of the cake but is one to watch for in the future.

The show does have its minuses. There could be some original music, as some of the speeches were a bit wordy and

might have been more effective as songs. But I couldn't help thinking that I was watching the start of the Rocky Horror Show of the 80s.

The day after I saw the show, I went to meet the cast to find out their comic book histories. I was delighted to meet some new comic book fiends as well as some old stalwarts.

Debra Richards, the tech person, was one of the newcomers to comics. "One of the things that came up while we were doing the play," said Debra, "was the role of women in comics."

"We thought the women didn't have enough to do. And when we started looking into the comics, we found the women always had secondary roles. Even when the

woman is the hero, she still comes across as a secondary character.

"It's totally sexist, the way women are drawn in comics. We wanted to use one female character that was fat and flabby, but Chris [Amos — hardcore comics reader and prime instigator of the play] said no because women are just not like that in comics."

Martin Lewis, the hero himself, sees American Eagle "moving on to a larger fringe venue or maybe the West End — or maybe even a TV show dealing with contemporary issues as they arise."

Whatever the future holds for American Eagle and his chums, I'll certainly be watching out for future episodes.

**Don Melia**





# The Ghost Riders

BY David LEACH

NEVADA, DEATH VALLEY, 1887.



IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THIS NEWSPAPER OFFICE THAT A QUEER AND UNUSUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS IS AT THIS MOMENT OCCURRING IN THE BARREN AND DESOLATE STATES OF NEVADA AND ARIZONA.

IT WOULD APPEAR, JUDGING BY SWORN TESTIMONIALS, THAT THE DEVIL IS ABROAD IN OUR FAIR LAND. THOUGH NOT IN A FORM THAT WE AS GOD FEARING PEOPLE WOULD NORMALLY RECOGNISE.

INFANT, IT IS NOT HE, THIS MOST EVIL AND CORRUPT OF CREATURES, WHO IS WREAKING HAVOC IN THESE OUR BROTHER STATES, BUT THREE OF HIS DISCIPLES WHO HAVE BECOME KNOWN AS 'THE GHOST RIDERS'.

THESE EXTREME FIGURES OF VIOLENCE, EVIL AND FEAR HAVE OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS WROUGHT A TERRIBLE AND HEINOUS CAMPAIGN OF DEATH, TORTURE, RAPE AND CARNAGE THROUGHOUT NEVADA AND ARIZONA IN, IT WOULD APPEAR, AN ATTEMPT TO APPEASE THEIR SATANIC MASTER!

THESE UN-DEAD ZOMBIES HAVE YET TO BE APPREHENDED BY THE BANDS OF LAW-ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND PRIESTS WHO ARE AT THIS MOMENT COMBING THE COUNTRY SIDE WITH THE SINGLE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF DESTROYING THE DEMONIC SPAWNS OF SATAN ONCE AND FOR ALL!

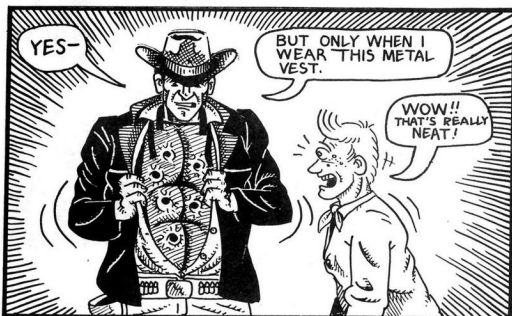
OUR HOPES AN PRAYERS GO WITH THESE GOD FEARING MEN AND WARRIORS.



MMHN  
MNHNNHM  
HNMHNNM  
HNMH!!









# SHOP TILL YOU DROP!

**R**EMEMBER THE DAYS when all there was was *Dark They Were and Golden Eyed*? Those days are long gone (and so, unfortunately, is *Dark They Were*...); comics are making a bigger splash, and the number of places you can buy them is still increasing. As a service to our readers — hardcore comics fans as well as new recruits — we plan to spotlight one or two comic book shops in each issue of *Heartbreak Hotel*. **DON MELIA REPORTS.**

Mega City is a fairly new comics shop in the heart of trendy Camden Town. Run by Martin Kravetz — with the help of Leslie the bookworm, Nick the comic expert and Paul the part-timer — it is a large, well-designed and well-stocked shop. Martin ran a mail order service for five years prior to opening the shop in July last year. The mail order service is still in operation, and has been expanded to offer telephone sales to credit card holders. The shop carries the usual range of comics — imports and UK-distributed — plus a good range of European graphic novels, postcards, posters, badges, and sci-fi. Horror fans will also be able to feed their addiction — as well as horror books. Mega City offers a frightening collection of horror masks. And for videorecorders, there is the new series of video interviews with the comic book megastars, including Alan Moore at the ICA. The best feature of the shop itself, though, is the amount of space — there is ample room to browse without being buffeted and battered as people force their way to the till. I had a great time, and I'm sure you will find this a comic shop with a lot to offer — including Sunday shopping. Yes folks, it's open seven days a week!

**But there's more to life than buying comics, isn't there? Sure — reading them! But where can you sit and read your comics in peace over a nice hot cup of coffee without the waiter or waitress or other diners giving you the kind of look usually reserved for lame dogs and screaming babies? Cafe Clique tells you where!**

Comfortable and white, you expect to leave the Cafe Casbar and step out onto a beach, not the centre of Covent Garden. The Casbar's central location makes it an ideal place to park yourself after a comics — buying spree at FP, Showcase or Gosh. The Casbar has just got itself a new manager and a new chef — the manager being Jane Andrews of Groucho's fame and the chef, Kristosser Rupert-Jude from the Soho Brasserie. In addition to the regular breakfast, lunch and supper, there are now plans to extend the menu further. One thing I hope will not change is the excellent coffee — a pleasure to drink while absorbed in the latest Gumby comic! As well as being a cafe, the Casbar doubles as an art gallery. Artists who put on shows there also design the menu cover for the duration of their show. February sees a show entitled *Squares at the Casbar*. Twenty designers have produced an interesting selection of scarves on many kinds of fabric. Prices range from £15 to £50, and the scarves are on sale next-door at Smiths Gallery. The Casbar is open from 9.00 am until 10.30 pm.

- *Mega City*, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1.
- *Cafe Casbar*, 52 Earlam Street, Seven Dials, London WC2.

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# MARGI CLARKE

● From page 36

wants to have eyes like no entry signs?... Well certainly not on a Friday night flappin' with the rest of the flock at the Birdcage, yeh needed all the tackle yeh could muster just to pick at the worm already turned...

"Ooh, I love the Pet Shop Boys," chirped Miss Nixy Coote, the youngest and sadly plainest of ten unmarried sisters. "Our Maisy got me into them, she reckons they're dead religious. It's a sin, da da da ra da dar da do."

"It's a scream yeh mean, Nixy. Your Maisy never away from the ale house."

"Well," cracked Nixy, pointing towards the door, "what can yeh do when yeh wellies let in?"

She could hatch a good joke when she needed to, and on this occasion she'd added a good one. From the back of the club, grouping under the green neon sign depicting a birdcage, flocked and swarmed the Birds Eye girls. Still in uniform, they looked both futuristic — with their white turbans and shorty white overalls — and almost sexy in an old Gracie Fields sort of way. They were clocked off and ready for action with a little dab of red lipstick and mile-high white stilettos. They headed as one towards the bar, first acquiring a drink, then quickly turning round to scan the room — this little ritual could not be faced before a legitimate drink, mostly Lagers and Black.

You never felt sure just who was lookin', anyway they had no real need to worry as they were the proud workers and holders of "the look". In rapt attention, in fact the only one to give notice, was the ever-impressionable Nixy Coote. Nixy, who above all other forms of dress loved "the look" so much she'd tried to steal it from next door's washing line, but got caught (according to scandal) with a peg on her finger. She had gone so far as to write to the Birds Eye factory begging for a uniform. She reasoned: "If I can't have a job, please, please let me have the 'look'!"

Nixy just had to have it, and planned to fashion her own design. "Just as soon as," she says hopefully to yeh face, "as soon as...I get a job. Yeh see," she shouted on this occasion over the top of Mel and Kim's *Respectable*, "if I could just get me hands on a uniform, I'm sure it'll give me an extra go of the fellas. I've gotta get me cards marked soon Mary," she cried, with a peculiar tweeting sound to her voice, "they haven't been done for months."

My poor friend Nixy, along with her nine unmarried sisters, was the first to feel the pinch of exodus, but a brave and painted face was put on everything — except when it came to the latest beau, then it went:

"Mary girl hurry up, I feel like Veronica Vomit," she anxiously called as I returned from requesting a record (*The Philly Duck*) from the Birdcage's friendly DJ, Mick Militant. "Sit down and hide me — Tony's in — I feel ashamed!"

"Don't be daft, yeh look lovely," I encouraged. "Is that your Maisy's dress? Pink really suits yeh."

"But Mary, I've not got me stilettos on, the heel's gone and..."

"Oh here soft girl, don't be worryin' — he won't even notice yeh..." but before I could go on, there on Nixy's face was the look of total hopelessness. She knew quite rightly that everyone noticed her feet, they couldn't be missed, and it wasn't just the feet which were fat and massive size nines, but the toes... She'd lost one fella after three whole months when he accidentally caught sight of them one night in bed (she forgot to keep her socks on). She cried for a whole week: "I've been dumped, chucked, do yeh know what the bute said Mary? He said...oh, it was awful, he said I had toes like monkeynuts!"

**Meet more Famous Kirkby Birds in the next issue of *Heartbreak Hotel*.**

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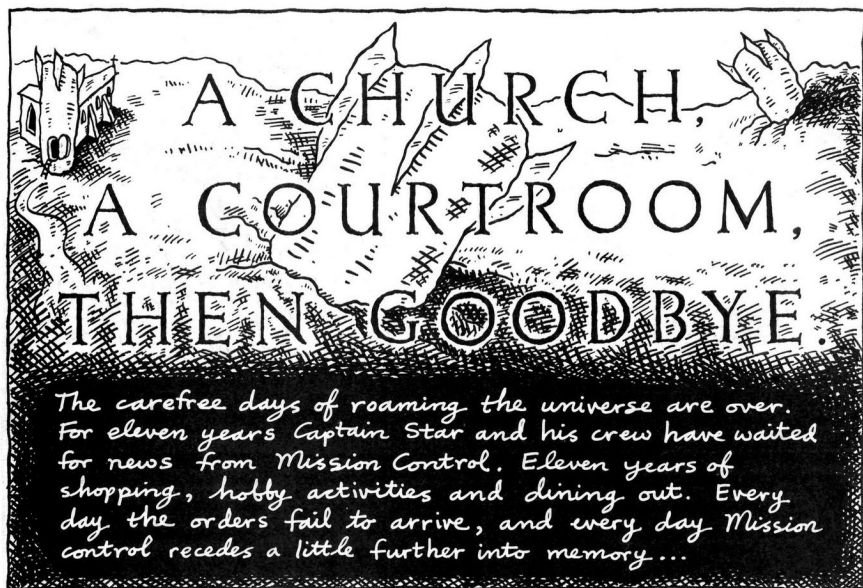
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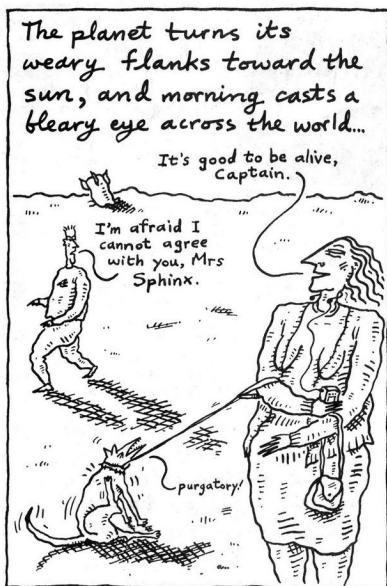
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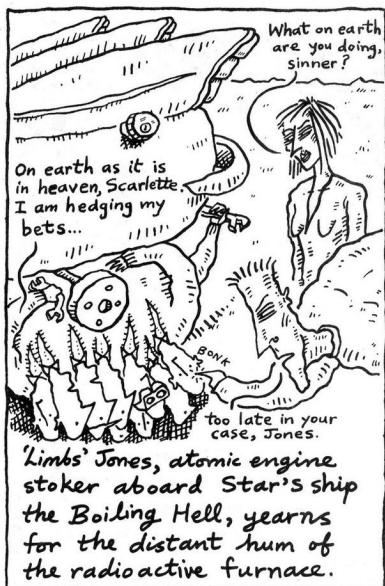
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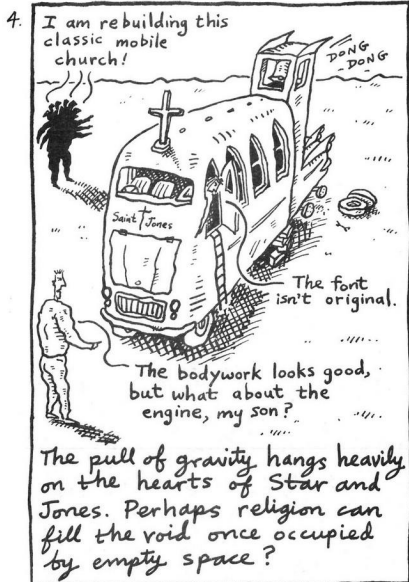


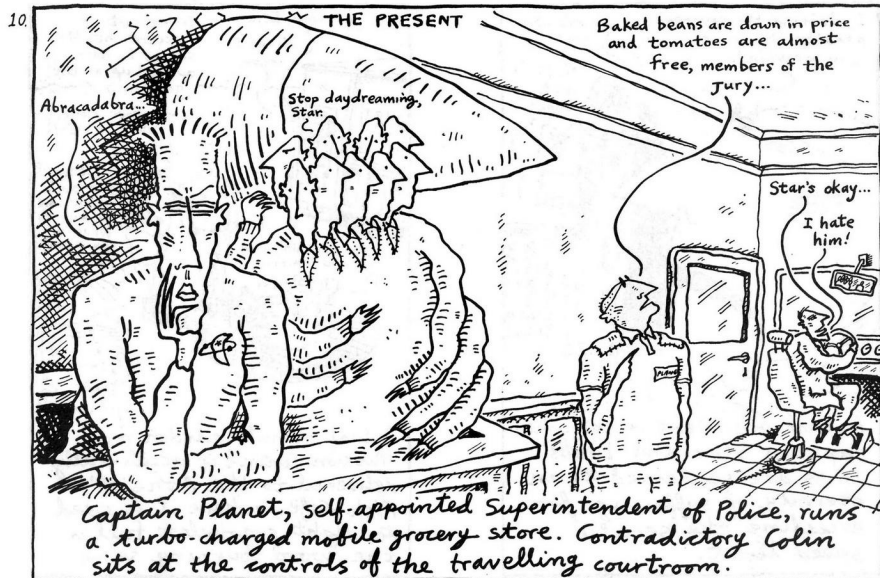
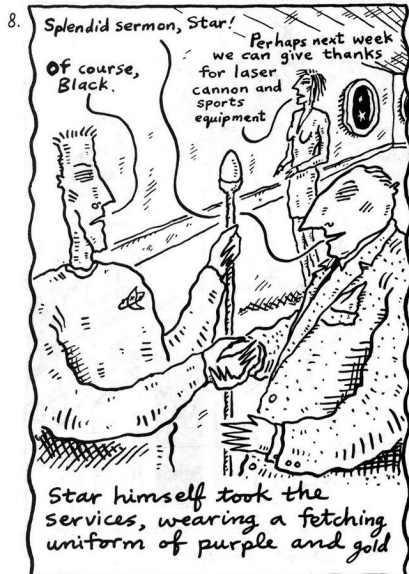
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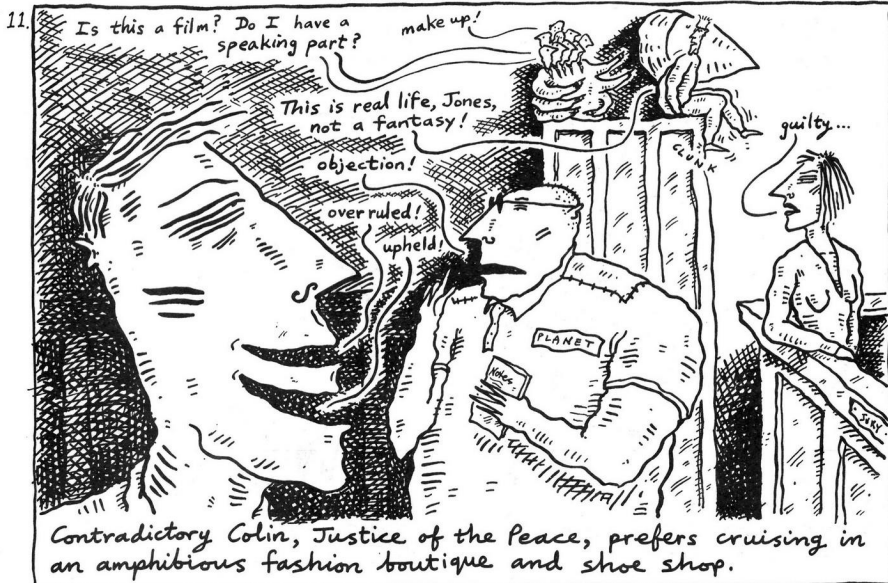


3.









Goodbye...



# SECOND CITY LIFE



You want to know what life is like up here?

First, it helps to reflect that Birmingham could easily be nothing more than a weak reflection of what's happening in London (we're talking lifestyle here!). But this would be an unfair appraisal. Like Manchester and Liverpool, Brum has its own trends, benefits and shortcomings (did someone mention unemployment?).

Despite the grimy facades beloved of the 1960s city planners, there's a buzz about as youthful entrepreneurs do their stuff — a reaction to criticisms that nothing new was going on. The philosophy is simple: if it doesn't exist, organise it!

Brum now has a lot to offer those in search of style, culture, or just places to hang out at . . . Try the Pen & Wig and Salvation on Saturdays; read the bi-monthly Sparbrook-produced comic *The Fish*; buy your retro clothing at Folio 50.

Visitors to the city are advised to search hard for the best places — pick up leaflets, talk to the natives — as life here tends to rely heavily on word of mouth. Events like the Film Festival (so much more hip than Cannes) and the Jazz Festival — both held in

November — are exceptions to the rule, receiving national acclaim.

Sartorially, Brummies still favour urban chic: DMs, second-hand 50ls, flat-top haircuts, anything black. Jean-Paul Gaultier is just not practical when it's raining!

Everyone seems to be publishing these days to provide an antidote to the ultra-dull local press. *Second Life* gives the lowdown on art and music, while *The Guide* is indispensable for newcomers to the city.

On the music front, jazz is hot news with masses of venues. The Cannonball pub is packed out every night. Half the bands in Brum come from Moseley (still home of the seriously arty) — like Big Moments, a dynamic band for the 80s.

Other names causing the tongues to wag at the weekly warehouse parties (venue unknown until it happens) are Somerville, End of Chat, Bop Baroque, Blue Ox Babes . . .

So, this has been an all-too-brief but idiosyncratic view of what's happening in Birmingham. The basic rule is: search for the action — there is (thankfully) life beyond the city centre fun-pubs.

## GRETA

"Have a nice day . . ."

Oh God, if one more creep says that to me, I'll scream. It's not politeness, just habit. Complete strangers, shopkeepers, telephone operators — they've all got this incurable disease.

You're hungover, late for your most important meeting, feeling like shit, and someone who doesn't really give a damn happily wishes you pleasant things. Why should they care when they don't even know you?

What really makes me heave is to find myself face to face with a gloating, perspiring salesman — keen, eager, enthusiastic and red-faced, trying his hardest to make a good impression. Well I tell you, when he starts saying, "I feel we have a real rapport going between us," I just want to cut his throat.

This man doesn't even know me — he only met me five minutes ago — and half an hour before he was creating a real rapport with another complete stranger. How dare he insult my intelligence by thinking that this will impress me? And although we have such a good thing going now, he won't even recognise me when we pass each other on the street. Not that I would want him to, the fat bulbous idiot. Gag me with a spoon.



## GRIPE

Even more cringe-making is when you meet someone and have barely spoken to them when they come out with the classic line, "I'm sure we were in a past life together." If reincarnation does exist, the chances of rediscovering someone who you knew in a previous life who now happens to be in the same pub at the same time as you seems pretty slim. As for lighting the flame of desire, I think a Zippo would have more success.

What should be done with these insincere morons? Personally, I'd like them all to be tied up in a room together so that they can cream over each other . . .

"I feel we have a real rapport going here."

"It's funny you should say that, because I feel I've met you before somewhere."

"Well I feel like I've known you all my life."

"Maybe it's because we were in a previous existence together."

"But haven't you just been in a previous existence with . . ."

"No, that was my colleague."  
"Thank God I've finally found someone who understands me."

# TRINA ROBBINS HITS THE MARK

IN THE UNITED States, birthplace of comics as we know them, comics have always reflected the current administration. Born during the Roosevelt era, superheroes were comparatively gentle and liberal, given to helping the Little Guy. The male superheroes made a point of never hitting women, and only the bad guys killed – good guys turned their vanquished foes over to the proper authorities.

I have before me a reproduction of a Superman panel from 1940: the Man of Steel has taken Hitler and Stalin (the other "Man of Steel") prisoner. In response to Hitler's question, "Where are you taking us?", Superman answers, "Next stop – Geneva, Switzerland!" He's taking them to the World Court of the League of Nations.

Today's comic book heroes more and more often don't bother any longer with proper authorities. Of course, neither does the current administration, blithely invading Grenada, mining the harbors of Nicaragua (and walking out of the World Court when this action was condemned), providing paid thugs to kill innocent citizens of the aforementioned country (and any annoying liberal American citizens who might get in the way), and doing God-knows-what in the Persian Gulf.

I have four recent comics on my desk – two Marvels and two from DC. The first, a DC comic called *The Question*, is rated "Suggested for mature readers" although there is less objectionable material in here than in the other three. The protagonist is a man who takes the law into his own hands. Oddly enough, the villain is *also* a man who takes the law into his own hands! The difference seems to be that the villain actually *kills* people, even though his victims are shown to be thoroughly despicable human beings who deserve what they get. So it's okay to take the law into your own hands but not to kill people, right?

Next we have *Justice*, a Marvel New Universe book. *This* guy kills people, and not just in self-defence. I'm told that apparently the protagonist can see auras, and when he sees a black aura it means that the possessor of the aura has killed, and is therefore fair game. This fact is not indicated very clearly in the comic, and unless one had read the series from the start, one would be under the impression (like I was) that he's just killing these guys because they're, well, nasty.

Anyway, I always thought that the law says even murderers are supposed to get a fair trial, and there are states in this country that do not have capital punishment.

In one issue, *Justice* (that's his name) kills a dope-dealer. Unless you really understand this stuff about the auras, you think he just killed the guy for being a dope-dealer. In another issue, *Justice* is threatened by two knife-wielding thugs. Denny Colt would have rendered them inoperative and tossed them off at the nearest police station, but our current hero obliterates them completely, turning them into bright red smoke – or perhaps spatters of blood, it's hard to tell. *Justice* carries the Comics Code seal of approval. Both *Justice* and *The Question* feature panel after panel of grim, snarling faces. Nobody smiles. Marvel's *The Punisher* is different. This code-approved hero actually grins as he shoots down the bad guys.

I saved the best/worst for last. This is a DC book titled *Peacemaker*. (Obviously employing the same sense of humour that moved Reagan to name his Peacekeeper missile.) *Peacemaker* isn't rated at all – it has neither a code seal of approval nor a mature readers notation – yet it



contains profanity (which doesn't bother me, but I'd have thought it would concern DC) and a truly sickening amount of violence.

The body-count in the first seven pages includes all the sunbathers and swimmers on the French Riviera, an entire team of nuclear disarmament negotiators from the US and one from Russia and their respective bodyguards, and finally, all the terrorists who were responsible for this wholesale slaughter.

Most of the characters in these four books are men. The female representation averages out to one and three quarters women per book. There's one mother in a small panel, getting her son out of the way of bullets, and one nurse. In *Justice*, people who have been enslaved by the Evil Empire are shown wearing robes, but the one woman is depicted nude and in chains.

In *The Question*, one of the two women is a battered and starved wife who cringes before her brutal husband, making no attempt to defend herself or her children. The other woman is also a wife. A continuing character in the series, she is married to the mayor of the city in which the story takes place. The mayor, it seems, is a drunken lout who can't fulfill his obligations, so his wife "Stands By Her Man" – she performs his duties for him and denies there's anything wrong; he's just been "sick".

The weirdest representations of women are in *Peacemaker*. One is the protagonist's wife, whose role seems to be to serve him drinks and worry about him. Then there's his shrink, who disguises herself as a *French maid*, complete with mini-skirt and fishnet stockings – honest to God!

Comics don't only mirror the terminal Rambosis that this country suffers from, they perpetuate it. At a recent convention, two teenage boys – perfectly nice high school kids – gave me a copy of a comic they'd done. It was a truly classic example of how such comics as the ones I've described have altered these kids' perceptions of reality.

In it, a young thug has just snatched a woman's purse. That's all – he's snatched her purse and is running away. The superhero catches him and... reduces him to a skeleton! He *kills* this guy for stealing a purse! Later he does the same thing to some guy who's only cracking a safe. Hey, if it's okay to kill a dope-dealer, why not a purse-snatcher or a safe-cracker?

Was Wertham right?

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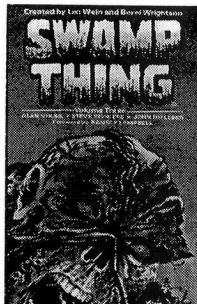
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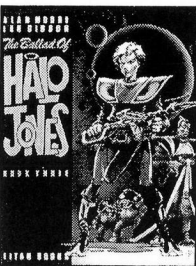
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